

Emergency Responder

WASHINGTON EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIVISION



WASHINGTON MILITARY DEPARTMENT

May-June 2002

New state rule to guide E911 spending after July 1

Washington's Enhanced 9-1-1 (E911) Program soon will conduct business differently. A revision to Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 118-65 went into effect July 1 setting new priorities for 911 excise tax fund expenditures.

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW) gives the State E911 Coordinator discretion in allocating funds in the manner best calculated. The method for allocation is specified in the WAC and is to be guided by the following prioritized factors:

- To assure that 911 dialing is operational statewide;
- To assist counties as necessary to assure that they can achieve a basic service level for 911 operations; and,
- To assist counties, as practicable, to acquire items of a capital nature appropriate to increasing 911 effectiveness.

The new county application schedule has specific deadlines that, if not met, will cause a county to lose its priority for fiscal assistance. This contrasts with the more flexible enhanced 911 support practices to date designed to support system implementation where it was anticipated that counties would be unable to anticipate costs well in advance.

The new process also implements the new legislative direction to assure that the highest priorities for the 911 systems are funded before lower priority items are considered.

RCW 38.52.540 establishes the enhanced 911 account in the state treasury. All receipts from the 911 excise tax are deposited in that fund.

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Helicopter rescue procedures were one of the 60 different classes conducted at the 2002 Washington State Search and Rescue Conference May 13-19 at Wind River Fields in Skamania County. Approximately 1,000 persons from search and rescue units, law enforcement agencies, fire services and military units in nine states, four Canadian provinces and one foreign country attended the conference. The 2003 conference will be held May 12-18 in Spokane County. (Skamania County photo).

State SAR conference attracts about 1,000 participants

The 2002 Washington State Search and Rescue (SAR) Conference attracted about 1,000 participants May 13-19 at Wind River Fields in Skamania County.

Conference and pre-conference sessions included search and rescue units, law enforcement agencies, the fire service, and military units from Washington, Alaska, California, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Virginia, British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, Newfoundland and New Zealand.

Pre-conference training from May 13-17 featured four courses sponsored by the Washington State SAR Office: SAR Incident Management-Basic Course, Urban Search Operations, Incident Command System (ICS) I-300, and ICS I-400.

There were also a number of vendor (fee based) courses including Water Rescue, Electronic Mapping, Wilderness Survival, Tracking, Wilderness First Aid, ELT/EPIRB/PLB, and SAR Helicopter Operations as well as two SAR Dog courses.

The May 18-19 conference itself consisted of over 60 different classes. Subjects ranged from Alzheimer's Lost Person Behavior, Urban Search, Interviewing, Major Incident Management, Advanced Search Planning, and Leadership to Horses in SAR, Survival Myths, ATV in SAR, Rough Land Evacuation, Basic Map Reading, Basic Helicopter, and Use of Packgoats in SAR. Included were ten different SAR dog classes and eight SAR management classes.

Wind River Search and Rescue and the Skamania County Sheriff's Office hosted the SAR conference.

Spokane County will host next year's conference May 16-18, 2003 (pre-conference training May 12-16). The conference web site is: www.spokanesar.org.

SPURS-EM project development underway

Development work has started under the new SPURS-EM Project under the contract between the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the Emergency Management Division (EMD).

NASA last fall announced the award of a \$703,500 grant, spread over a three-year period, to Washington EMD to study the use of satellite information in emergency management activities.

The Strategic and Practical Use of Remotely Sensed data in Emergency Management (SPURS-EM) application will capture and interpret space imagery data about the earth's ground surface.

University of Washington-Seattle scientists will interpret the remotely sensed data to develop a product that will be most useful to emergency managers. The goal places remotely sensed data in a central role for all phases of emergency management – preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation.

The SPURS-EM application will complement two other FEMA-created programs, HAZUS and FEMIS, for use in emergency management.

Allen Jakobitz, EMD senior hazard analyst, began assembling a geographic information system (GIS) as a foundation upon which to overlay data from the NASA satellite to assist with risk assessment, hazard vulnerability and mitigation.

Jakobitz is gathering data from free sources to create a base layer map depicting counties, cities, roads, ferry routes, rivers, lakes, etc. He will then layer the remotely sensed product provided by the UW into a usable format.

The ArcView platform, the same platform used by the FEMIS and HAZUS GIS software programs, will also be used to access the SPURS-EM product.

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SBA declares economic disaster for Friday Harbor fire

Acting quickly on Gov. Gary Locke's request, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) declared an emergency economic injury disaster June 14 in Friday Harbor to assist businesses affected by a devastating May 9 fire.

The fire destroyed five businesses and caused a large decline in retail sales for other businesses in the downtown area of Friday Harbor on San Juan Island.

The SBA's decision came in the same week that the governor's request and the supporting documentation from affected businesses were forwarded to the SBA's Sacramento regional office.

"I want to thank S.B.A. Administrator Hector V. Barreto for acting on my request so expeditiously," Locke said.

As a result of the declaration, small businesses affected by the fire will be able to apply for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans. The 3.5 percent low-interest loans are designed to help small businesses meet financial obligations and operating expenses.

Small business owners may file applications until March 14, 2003. In order to help business owners apply for the low-interest disaster loans, the SBA operated a disaster office at Friday Harbor's Islander Bank Administration through July 2.

Information and loan applications also may be obtained by writing the U.S. Small Business Administration, Disaster Area 4 Office, P.O. Box 13795, Sacramento, CA 95853-4795, or by calling (916) 566-7240. Hearing impaired individuals may call (916) 566-7388.

Quinault Indian Tribe honored as "TsunamiReady"

Washington's Quinault Indian Tribe has been honored as the nation's first native American "TsunamiReady" community by the National Weather Service (NWS). The May 30 ceremony at Taholah also recognized the tribe as a "StormReady" community. The Quinaults worked with Gray's Harbor County Emergency Management to successfully meet the readiness criteria and were certified by an advisory board comprised of local county emergency managers and representatives from NWS and the Washington Emergency Management Division.

USCG to deploy security team to Seattle in July

The first of four new Coast Guard "SWAT" teams, created to provide quick response to a threat of terrorism at any United States port, arrived in Seattle on July 3.

The other Marine Safety and Security Teams (MSSTs) will be deployed later in the summer to their home ports of Houston, Tex., Long Beach, Calif., and Portsmouth, Va., after completing training at Camp Lejeune at Jacksonville, N.C. The team assignments were announced in June to Seattle area media and Associated Press by Cmdr. Jim McPherson, Coast Guard spokesman in Washington, D.C.

Each 100-member team will run 30-foot boats - with top speeds of 40-plus knots - that are designed to be quickly placed on trailers and flown by military C-130s to other ports, where suspicious ships can be intercepted before they reach inner waters. The teams also will be equipped with bomb-sniffing dogs.

McPherson said the teams would be deployed to potential trouble spots based on intelligence information. Coast Guard intelligence workers poring over cargo, passenger and crew lists of the 10,000 vessels that make U.S. port calls each year will flag certain vessels or people, and a security team will fly in.

Farm disaster requests made for six eastern counties

Gov. Gary Locke requested four U.S. Department of Agriculture disaster declarations in June for crop damages and losses this year in six eastern Washington counties.

The governor sought aid for Okanogan, Chelan and Douglas counties because of damages to fruit crops – apples, cherries and other soft fruit – as a result of severe cold weather between April 23 and May 7.

A second declaration was requested for damages to Lincoln County's winter wheat crop as a result of snow and freezing temperatures between May 6 and 8.

Locke asked for a third declaration for Benton County because of damages to grain and soft fruit crops resulting from drought, freezing temperature, and high winds between January and May.

A fourth request sought an agricultural disaster declaration for Franklin County as a result of freezing weather and high winds between April 8 and May 8 that caused significant crop loss to sweet cherries, nectarines, peaches and apricots. The cold weather also delayed the county's alfalfa crop.

If approved by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture following loss verification by the Farm Service Agency, the disaster designations would make low interest loans available to affected farmers, ranchers and agricultural businesses. The U.S. Small Business Administration also will declare an associated economic injury disaster for adversely impacted businesses in the affected counties as well as in contiguous counties.

Federal rules require new hazard mitigation plans

State agencies and local governments must prepare hazard mitigation plans using recently published federal guidelines if they wish to remain eligible for hazard mitigation funding for new disasters after Nov. 1, 2003.

Required by the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000, the plans will seek to reduce the nation's disaster losses as well as help decision makers reduce their jurisdictions' susceptibility to disasters.

Key elements of the new planning requirements are:

- A risk assessment that identifies the type and location of hazards, describes the jurisdiction's vulnerability, identifies critical facilities and infrastructure in hazard areas, and provides an estimate of potential dollar losses to vulnerable structures.
- A hazard mitigation strategy that describes the jurisdiction's hazard mitigation goals, identifies and prioritizes mitigation actions, and identifies its capability to mitigate hazards.
- A linkage between state and local mitigation programs. Local plans will provide the basis for the state plan's risk assessment and hazard mitigation strategy.

All plans must be formally adopted. Local plans must be sent by July 1, 2003 to the State Hazard Mitigation Officer for review; the state will forward the plan to the Federal Emergency Management Agency for approval. Local jurisdictions are encouraged to build upon their work in flood plain management, growth management, and critical area ordinances in developing their hazard mitigation plans.

Without an approved plan, the state will lose its ability to obtain federal

Oregon governor okays depot response plan

Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber certified in June that a community emergency response plan was "adequate and fully operational" for test burns in the Umatilla Chemical Depot's \$500 million incinerator.

Kitzhaber's certification was a key step to start a series of test burns later this year of surrogate material in the depot's incineration system. Current plans call for the test burns to start July 24. Incineration of the depot's chemical weapons is slated to begin in May 2003.

The governor's Executive Review Panel had voted unanimously in May to recommend to Kitzhaber that the test burns proceed. The panel's decision was based on assessments of community emergency response exercises in 2002 and annual community profiles.

"My certification is a culmination of years of work by hundreds of people who have toiled to make their communities safe in the event of an accident at the Umatilla Chemical Depot," Kitzhaber said. "I am extremely proud of the way the communities in Umatilla and Morrow counties, along with the our partners in Washington state, have pulled together to build a strong emergency preparedness program."

The Umatilla depot contains about 12 per cent of the nation's total chemical weapons stockpile.

Kitzhaber said he would ask his review panel--which consists of first responders, local officials and tribal leaders, the Oregon National Guard and state agencies--to meet at least annually and report on the Umatilla Chemical Stockpile Emergency Preparedness Program (CSEPP).

"Should CSEPP ever fall short of its present high standards, the governor may then ask the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality to take corrective action through the permit process," the governor said.

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Personnel

Christi Moores returned June 10 to the permanent position of secretary senior in the Programs section of the Policy, Programs, and Training Unit after serving in a state project position. She has worked at EMD since 1999.

Ron Crooks retired from state service June 30 after working for EMD since 1991. He was an assistant coordinator for the Search and Rescue program and performed many other support functions for the Emergency Operations Section of the Response and Recovery Unit. Crooks plans to enjoy his retirement in his hometown of Boise, Idaho.

Jocelyn Redmond received her permanent appointment June 1 as Information Tech System Specialist (ITSS) 2 in training for the ITSS 3 position in the Telecommunications Section of the Response and Recovery Unit.

E911 rule starts July 1

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These monies were made available to the counties to help implement and operate enhanced 911 statewide. With implementation achieved throughout Washington, new funding priorities for the 911 excise tax will include the above priorities for funds distributed to counties as well as authority for statewide acquisition of services, where

Hazard mitigation plans

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funding to repair damaged public facilities, and to pay for hazard mitigation projects, fire management and other response and recovery activities provided under the Stafford Act. Emergency response assistance will be unaffected.

Washington's EMD Mitigation Section is providing technical assistance and preparing planning materials to help local government planning efforts.

The local hazard mitigation planning guide has been revised and is posted on the EMD web site at www.wa.gov/wsem.

EMD will award this summer planning grants on a competitive basis to local governments that previously submitted a planning letter of intent and followed up with a planning grant application.

Additionally, EMD is working on the state's plan and is re-establishing the State Hazard Mitigation Advisory Committee to assist with the state's planning initiative.

For more information on local hazard mitigation planning, contact Marty Best, State Hazard Mitigation Officer, at (253) 512-7073, or Joan Sterling, Hazard Mitigation Project Supervisor, at (253) 512-7079.

Contact Mark Stewart, State Hazard Mitigation Strategist, at (253) 512-7072, for more information on the state planning effort.

SPURS-EM Project

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"I foresee that GIS will become the new PowerPoint for office workers. Ten years ago, the average office worker did not use any presentation software, and now most do. Two years ago, nobody even knew with GIS was, and now they are using it to create roadmaps over the Internet," said Jakobitz. "I predict it will be commonplace in the next 10 years."

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May-June 2002. Published by the Emergency Management Division of the Washington Military Department.

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The Adjutant General

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Washington State
Department of Printing

The Washington Emergency Management Division, including the State Emergency Operations Center, is located in Building 20 on Camp Murray, which is at exit 122 on Interstate 5 south of Tacoma, Washington.